(c) what steps have been taken by Government to encourage such projects to tap renewable sources of energy?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) The Delhi Energy Development Agency has taken up an experimental project which relates to scientific, technical and engineering verification of a process, claimed to have been developed by an individual for generation of combustible fuel from cellulosic wastes.

(b) The project consists of raw material, preparation and handling equipment, an experimental reactor, a cleaning and cooling train and flaring up arrangement, besides fire safety arrangements in the initial phase of the project. The equipment for conversion of combustible fuel to electricity (dual fuel generator set) will be added if and when process parameters are verified & experimentations completed. The process is claimed to have been developed only for cellulosic wastes *viz.* cotten waste/willow dust.

(c) The Government (Delhi Administration) are meeting full cost of this experimental project, and other necessary infrastructural facilities. The experiment will help to determine whether the process claimed is feasible or exploitable.

Popularising the improved Chulha programme

*14. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of non-conventional Energy sources (NCES) has recently decided to popularise the improved Chulha programme at national level;

(b) if so, what are the details of the improved Chulha programme; and

(c) to what extent the rural people will be benefited and will be enabled to conserve and optimise the use of fuel wood?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) The Improved Chulha Programme was launched by the Deptt. of Non-conventional Energy Sources as a demonstration project in December, 1983. Subsequently it was converted by the Department into a National Programme with effect from 1.4.1985 in view of the success and very encouraging response from various parts of the country.

(b) This programme is being implemented on a multi-model approach through State Government, State Government agencies, Voluntary Organisations, etc. Fixed and portable type of chulhas which have a minimum thermal efficiency of 20% and 25% respectively are developed and propagated. On an average the unit cost of fixed chulha is of the order of Rs. 40 to Rs. 50/- and of portable chulhas is between Rs. 78/- and Rs. 120/- depending on the type and requirement. The beneficiary has to contribute Rs. 10/- and the rest of the cost is met by the Government. For portable models subsidy to the extent of 75% is provided to the ST/SC and hilly areas beneficiaries and to others the extent of subsidy is 50%. Besides, the Government is providing support for the various activities of the programme such as training, technical and R&D activities, creation of mass awareness and staff support to the implementing agencies, maintenance and repair services etc.

(c) The benefits of the programme among other are as under:—

(1) Conservation and optimisation in the use of fuelwood and help in preventing deforestation as the efficiency of the improved

chulha is about 20% as compared to 5% to 10% in traditional chulhas.

(2) Elimination of black smoke from the kitchens resulting in great improvement in the health of women and general cleanliness and upgradtion of the environment.

(3) Reduction in the drudgery of women since the amount of fuel to be gathered is reduced as also the time required for cleaning kitchen and utensils is reduced.

(4) General of employment at the local level in construction/installation of chulhas.

Since inception of the programme till end of March, 1988 over 40 lakh improved chulhas have already been installed all over the country which are expected to be saving about 28 lakh tonnes of firewood equivalent valued at about Rs. 112 crores per annum.

Setting up of advisory council for Oil and Natural Gas Commission

*15. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Advisory Council has been set up by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what will be its functions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Oil and Natural Gas Commission has set up 3 Advisory Councils on exploration strategy, human resources development and management and corporate policies for getting expert advice in these areas.

Prices of Petrol and High Speed Diesel in India

*16. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Petrol and High Speed Diesel is costliest in India as compared to other countries of the world;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the cost of petrol has decreased all over the world; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for continuous increase in price of petrol and other petroleum products in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Digital automatic telephone exchange at Cuttack

*17. SHRI SUBAS MOHANTY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to set up 1000 line capacity digital Automatic Telephone Exchange at Cuttack in Orissa; and

(b) what are the main features of the proposal and steps taken to implement it?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) A 1000 line